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ABSTRACT

School board members, district superintendents, and building principals in 170 districts in 16 western states were surveyed to determine the role of school boards in school self-study evaluations. Analysis of the questionnaires resulted in the following conclusions: (1) board members seldom assisted in the evaluation process, especially in larger districts; (2) school administrators more often perceived a higher level of board involvement and better evaluation procedures than did board members; (3) both administrators and board members rated the procedures more highly than the final recommendations and felt the recommendations would not be very useful for board decision making; (4) the main reasons for lack of greater board involvement included lack of time, uncertainty about their roles, and the belief that they were not needed; (5) both administrators and board members ascribed lack of initiative and interest to the other group; (6) some support existed for greater board involvement, especially in reviewing administrative and policy-making activities, preliminary evaluation recommendations, and school philosophy; and (7) self-instructional materials and inservice training were thought to be beneficial, and should be provided by accrediting agencies, state school board associations, or state departments of education. (The questionnaire is appended.) (MH)

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THE ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS IN SCHOOL SELF-STUDY EVALUATIONS

NICK L. SMITH

Final Report Submitted to
The National Study of School Evaluation

August 1978

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PREFACE

Under the sponsorship of the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE), a survey study was conducted to assess the role of local school boards in self-study accreditation evaluations. This document is the final report submitted to NSSE under the research grant and details the findings of that survey study.

A few comments about the organization of this report may aid the reader in identifying the sections of most interest. Units I and II contain the full, detailed account of the conduct and results of the study. These units are the most technical and provide the basis for the subsequent discussions and summaries of the survey study. Unit III includes a review of the study findings and the formal recommendations made as a result of the study. Unit IV contains, as required under the research grant, a summary of the study and its findings suitable for journal publication. Since the audience for this summary was taken to be a diverse group of evaluation practitioners, accrediting agency personnel, members of state school board associations, and local administrators and school board members, the summary omits many of the technical details. The reader wishing merely to overview the report is encouraged to first consult the Unit IV summary. For the briefest overview, turn to Appendix B which contains a two-page synopsis of the study.

August 1978

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Many individuals and agencies contributed to the completion of this report.

A very special note of gratitude goes to Denise Smith who managed the daily operation of the survey, performed data tabulation and content analysis, and generally insured that everything ran smoothly.

Grateful appreciation also goes to Dorothy Erpelding and Sherri Dye who assisted in constructing survey mailing lists and implementing the survey procedures.

Tom Owen computer analyzed the survey results with professional dispatch and insight. Judith Turnidge produced the final manuscript under adverse conditions but with her usual calm efficiency. Their contributions are much appreciated.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance of the state and regional accrediting associations and the state school board associations in the 16 states surveyed who provided the basic information from which to construct the survey mailing lists. The study literally would not have been possible without their cooperation.

Finally, thanks is due the several hundred local administrators and school board members who took the time to complete and return the survey questionnaires. It is their experience and insight that provide the substance of this report.

Although grateful acknowledgment is given these many individuals for their cooperation and support, any inadequacies remaining in the report are the responsibility of the author.

N. L. S.

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UNIT I: STUDY DESIGN

1. Study Objectives

School boards have traditionally played only a minor role in school self-study evaluations. The involvement of school boards (i.e., boards of control variously called boards of education, boards of trustees, school committees, or school boards) in the evaluation process has generally been limited to meeting with the accreditation team to hear their findings and to receiving a copy of the final evaluation report from the superintendent. Board members minimally participate in the planning or conduct of the actual self-study activities.

Master (1969) reports that most of the board members in the 57 schools he investigated reported being aware of the self-study evaluation, but not personally involved in it. Ironically, board members indicated greater involvement in the accreditation team visit, while the superintendents, principals, and school staffs all judged the self-study phase to be the most helpful part of the evaluation process.

Why school boards are so little involved in school self-study evaluations is not clear. It is possible to argue from at least four different perspectives that school boards ought to have a major role in such studies: (a) the formal responsibilities of school boards, (b) the representational nature of school board members, (c) the need to improve school board operations themselves, and (d) the pragmatic constraints in improving school operations.

- School boards bear the formal, legal, financial, and political responsibility for school operations. As Manlove (1967) points out, whenever the school board makes policy decisions it is in essence evaluating the school and making judgments about the nature and quality

of its operations. It is puzzling, therefore, that school boards should play such a minor role in the most comprehensive evaluations of the schools over which they have primary responsibility.

- School board members are elected as the official representatives of the community in educational matters. Although parents are occasionally included in school evaluation activities, there is generally no systematic representation of community attitudes in such activities as the specification of school philosophy and objectives. Community attitudes ought to be reflected in the school evaluation work through the community's elected representatives, the members of the local school board.

- With the increasing complexity of school operations, school boards need to periodically reassess their own operating procedures. School boards need to conduct their own self-study evaluations to address such concerns as (a) how are school issues being brought to the board's attention, (b) is the board being presented with alternative plans of action or only go/no-go options, and (c) is the board gathering sufficient background information before proceeding with difficult policy issues. School board operating procedures could be made more efficient and responsive if board members were more involved in the entire school review process.

- Douglass (1963) argues that one of the major outcomes of self-study accreditation evaluations is that they enable school administrators to interest school board members in ways of improving school operations. Similarly, Littrell and Bailey (1976) argue that a major advantage of such evaluation processes is that superintendents and school boards can clarify their respective areas of responsibility and jointly plan for the long-range future of the school. Such advantages, however, are dependent on the early and continuing involvement of the school boards in the evaluation process. It is only pragmatic to insure the involvement of those individuals who will have the final approval on the major school changes suggested by the evaluation study.

Why, if such strong arguments can be posed for school board involvement, have school boards traditionally played such a minor part in these studies? A primary reason may be that no concrete role for school board involvement in this process has ever been defined. For example, Evaluative Criteria (1969) contains few references to school board activities during the evaluation process: a form is provided for

rating school board procedures (p. 320), school board members rate the administrative staff (p. 7), and mention is made that administrators may wish to have the school board approve school philosophy statements before proceeding to the statement of school objectives (p. 30). Although it is suggested that schools may wish to involve parents and students in the evaluation procedures (p. 8), absolutely no mention is made of involving school board members in any significant way.

It does appear, in fact, that there is a general presumption that school board members will not be significantly involved in these school evaluations. In Evaluative Criteria (1969) administrators are warned that since school board members will not be familiar with the evaluation procedures, care must be taken in how study results are presented to school boards (pp. 12-14). Finally, it has been reported that in developing the evaluative review criteria for both secondary and junior high schools, the following groups were consulted: teachers, administrators, subject-matter specialists, state department representatives, and college and university instructors (Evaluative Criteria, 1969, p. 5; Manlove, 1967, p. 72). Note that school boards are conspicuously absent from this list.

Three findings of Master's (1969) study suggest that a new role of school board involvement might improve the utility of self-study evaluations if that role were compatible with school boards' governance responsibilities.

a. Board members complain that the final report is produced too late in the year to be acted upon. This complaint implies that board members have not understood the long-term nature of the evaluation and have not used the evaluation findings as input to their own long-term planning and policy deliberations.

b. Lack of resources is cited as the major reason for failure to implement evaluation recommendations. This suggests that recommendations are made without due regard for existing resource limitations. Involving school board members, who control resource allocations, should result in recommendations that are more financially feasible.

c. School board members report that they are less supportive of the evaluation process than are superintendents and principals. This implies that self-study evaluations are probably doing little to meet the information and policy needs of school boards.

Procedures which would increase school board involvement in order to insure recommendations that the board thought timely, worthy of support, financially feasible, and compatible with their governance needs, would seem to be useful additions to the evaluation process.

Whether a more clearly defined role of school board involvement will improve the quality or utility of school self-study evaluations is ultimately an empirical question. As a first step, therefore, the present study empirically investigated the following questions:

- How much and in what ways are school boards currently involved in school self-study evaluations?
- What is the relationship between judgments of the quality and utility of school self-study evaluations and the amount of school board involvement?
- What is the relationship between the involvement of school board members and their subsequent approval of recommended school changes?
- How do school board members, school principals, and superintendents feel about school board involvement in self-study evaluations? Specifically:
  - * How satisfied are they with the current level of involvement?
  - * Why do they think school boards are not more involved in such studies?
  - * Is there a perceived need for a new school board role compatible with the board's governance responsibilities?
  - * What materials or procedures would be useful in increasing school board involvement?

The answers to these questions have important implications not only for school self-study evaluations, but for all programmatic school evaluations.

2. Survey Events

In order to address the questions posed in the previous section, a survey study was conducted. This study employed a particular survey methodology which emphasizes a highly personalized approach coupled with repeated mailings (Dillman, 1972; Dillman and Frey, 1974; Dillman et al., 1974). An initial mailing followed by three followup mailings was used over a seven-week period to insure a high response rate. Through the use of these procedures and a highly personalized approach (the use of hand-signed cover letters, followup cards, and group-specific appeals), it is possible to consistently achieve response rates of 65 to 95 percent (Dillman et al., 1974). The present study achieved an overall response rate of 80 percent.

The following is a brief overview of the major survey study events.

September 1977 - December 1977
: Solicited lists of schools conducting self-study evaluations in 1975-1976 and 1976-1977 from regional accrediting associations for states in the western half of the U. S. (lists included building principal and district superintendent names and addresses; lists were requested from individual states for North Central Association, where no central file is maintained).

October 1977 - January 1978
: Solicited lists of all school board members (names and addresses) for 1975-1976 and 1976-1977 from state school board associations for all schools identified above.

December 1977 - February 1978
: Collected background demographic information on schools identified above from existing data sources (e.g., state department records and the School Universe Data Book).

November 1977 - February 1978
: Drafted, reviewed and revised survey questionnaire and cover letters.

February 1978
Sampled school board members and constructed master survey mailing list.*

March 1978 - April 1978
Conducted mail survey including
Initial mailing - March 6
First followup - March 13
Second followup - March 27
Third followup - April 10
Cut-off date - May 5

May 1978 - June 1978
Coded and keypunched survey data. Categorized and summarized open-ended responses.

June 1978 - July 1978
Computer analyzed survey data

July 1978 - August 1978
Prepared final report. Distributed "Summary of Results" letter to respondents requesting a copy of survey results (see Appendix B).

3. Instrument Development

A questionnaire booklet was used in this survey. The initial pages of the questionnaire focused on the respondent's first-hand experience in the school accreditation evaluation conducted the previous year. Using this focus as a basis, respondents were then asked to reply to a series of policy-level questions. The questionnaire contained 18 questions covering the following topics:

- Level and type of school board participation in the most recent self-study evaluation
- Quality of the recent evaluation study procedures and recommendations
- Impediments to increased school board participation in such evaluations

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*Survey limited to evaluations conducted during 1976-1977 due to resource limitations and difficulty in identifying respondents for 1975-1976 period.

- Desired level and type of school board involvement
- Desired assistance in increasing school board involvement
- Demographic characteristics of respondents

The questionnaire was revised several times before administration, based on pilot trials and expert reviews. During the developmental process, the following individuals provided consultative input and/or expert reviews of the survey instrument.

Frank Anderson, Colorado
Executive Director of the Northern Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services

Ed Brainard, Colorado
Colorado representative of the North Central Accrediting Association

Roy Brubaker, Colorado
Colorado State Department of Education staff member responsible for school board training

Don Dillman, Washington
Chairman of Department of Rural Sociology, Washington State University, and survey specialist

Don Fassotti, Oregon
Executive Director of the Northwest Accrediting Association

Keats Garman, Oregon
Anthropologist and community change expert experienced in working with school boards

Ray Jongeward, Washington
Community change specialist, past district superintendent and school board member

Mickey Lee, Oregon
Evaluation specialist, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Don Manlove, Indiana
Executive Director, National Study of School Evaluation

Len Sargent, Montana
Executive Director of the Montana State School Board Association

Blaine Worthen, Oregon
Director of the Evaluation, Research and Assessment Division of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

A copy of the final questionnaire and the cover letters used in the study is included in Appendix A. Psychometric information indicating the quality of the survey items is included in Unit II: Study Results.

4. Population Identification and Sampling

The population of interest in this study was all school board members, district superintendents, and building principals involved in conducting self-study evaluations. Further, since only experience-based judgments were desired as a basis for making policy recommendations, only those people who had actually been recently involved in such evaluations were surveyed. Mailing lists were therefore constructed from past NSSE accreditation evaluations for the school year 1976-1977 (the evaluations were conducted from September 1976 to June 1977; the survey data were collected in March and April of 1978).

There were not sufficient resources to conduct a national survey. Although there were sufficient resources to survey a national sample, the cost of constructing such a mailing list was prohibitive. As indicated in the previous section, considerable effort and the collaboration of multiple state and regional agencies is required to build such lists.

All districts in the western half of the United States which conducted evaluations in 1976-1977 were included in the survey, with the exception of those districts in Hawaii, California, and Texas. A total of 170 districts in 16 states were surveyed--see Figure 1. (A total of 175 districts were initially contacted, but 5 districts were dropped when it was learned that, contrary to accreditation records, they had not conducted evaluations in 1976-1977). Hawaii was excluded from the survey because its educational structure, which is unlike those

FIGURE 1: States Included in Mail Survey

of most other states in the union, does not include school boards. During 1976-1977 approximately 189 schools in California and 200 schools in Texas conducted evaluations, both states conducting more evaluations than the other 16 states combined. Because of limited resources and in order to avoid biasing the results in favor of California and Texas, they were dropped from the study.

No private schools were included in the survey, and for districts in which more than one school conducted an evaluation during 1976-1977, one school was selected at random. The cover letters accompanying the questionnaire named the school under study to avoid any confusion in such districts.

Four individuals were surveyed in each district: the district superintendent, the building principal for the school under study, and two randomly selected school board members. In all four cases the individuals surveyed were those people who actually held their position at the time of the evaluation, even if they had subsequently left the district or changed roles. Some board members indicated that their tenure overlapped only briefly with the evaluation activities; in those cases another board member was randomly selected.

5. Response Rates and Respondent Characteristics

With an initial sample of 675 individuals, the survey achieved a response rate of 89 percent for administrators (building principals and district superintendents) and 71 percent for school board members for a combined response rate of 80 percent. The results discussed in Unit II are thus based on the responses of 539 individuals (299

administrators and 240 school board members).* The unusually high response rates for both groups of respondents lends credibility to the study findings. The response rates for each of the 16 states included in the survey are displayed in Table 1. The rates range from 68 to 100 percent, indicating that each of the 16 states was adequately represented.

Table 1
Survey Response Rates by State

State	Districts Surveyed	Individuals Surveyed	Percent Response Rate
Wyoming	3	12	100
Kansas	16	64	89
Oregon	5	19	89
Nebraska	15	60	87
Washington	15	60	85
New Mexico	6	24	83
North Dakota	7	28	82
Arizona	24	96	81
Idaho	9	34	76
Montana	10	38	76
Alaska	3	12	75
South Dakota	8	32	75
Colorado	15	60	73
Oklahoma	22	88	73
Nevada	5	20	70
Utah	7	28	68
	170	675	

*Of the 136 individuals who did not complete the questionnaire, 7 administrators and 15 school board members sent notes of refusal indicating lack of time, knowledge of the evaluation or interest in the survey study. Nothing was heard from the remaining 114 nonrespondents.

The following information describes the 170 districts included in the survey. The surveyed districts:

- Contained from 1 to 142 schools, with an average of 13.5 schools per district (std. dev. = 22.7)
- Had school boards that ranged from 4 to 11 members, with an average of 5.9 members per board (std. dev. = 1.1)

Only one school having a 1976-1977 evaluation was considered in each district. The student enrollments in the schools considered ranged from 85 to 2,584, with a mean enrollment of 740.5 students (std. dev. = 562.1). The schools considered were mostly junior and senior high schools as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Types of Schools Surveyed

Grades	Frequency	Percent
K-6 (elem.)	11	6.5
7-8, 7-9 (jr. high)	18	10.6
9-12, 10-12 (sr. high)	118	69.4
7-12 (jr. high, sr. high)	22	12.9
K-12 (elem., jr. high, sr. high)	1	.6
	170	100.0

Since a self-study evaluation is a school-level event, a district with 10 schools has 10 times as many evaluations to conduct as a district with 1 school. Therefore, for the purposes of studying school board involvement in these evaluations, districts were classified into 3 sizes,

depending on whether they contained 1-3 schools (small districts, frequency = 58), 4-9 schools (medium districts, frequency = 62) or 10 or more schools (large districts, frequency = 50).

For most of the 539 respondents, information on their age, sex, and educational role was also collected. The average age of the respondents was 46.0 years (N = 512, std. dev. = 7.5 years). Note from Table 3 below that the larger the district (in terms of number of schools) the older the administrators and school board members are. Also, regardless of district size, the administrators tend to be slightly older than the school board members.

Table 3
Respondent Average Age by Role and District Size

	Administrators		Board Members	
	Average Age	Frequency	Average Age	Frequency
Small District (1-3 schools)	45.9	99	44.8	77
Medium District (4-9 schools)	46.1	106	45.0	74
Large District (10 or more schools)	47.9	84	46.1	72
Total	46.6	289	45.3	223

Table 4 illustrates the sex distribution of the respondents (N = 518). Note that almost all the administrators are male, while one-quarter of the school board members are female. Also, the larger the district, the smaller the percent of female administrators, but the greater the percent of female board members.

Table 4
Respondent Sex by Role and District Size

	Administrators		Board Members	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Small District (1-3 schools)	98.0%	2.0%	79.2%	20.8%
Medium District (4-9 schools)	98.1%	1.9%	75.0%	25.0%
Large District (10 or more schools)	100.0%	0.0%	65.3%	34.7%
Total	98.6%	1.4%	73.3%	26.7%

Respondents were identified as administrators (building principal or district superintendent) and school board members based on their role at the time of the 1976-1977 evaluation. If some respondents had held multiple roles in the past, however, then the interpretation of administrator-school board member differences would be confounded. As indicated in Table 5, there was a singular lack of overlap between the two roles. Based on this sample, administrators and school board members apparently have had little opportunity to view the other's position from first-hand experience of their own.

Table 5
Respondent Educational Role Experience

Years Experience As	Administrators			Board Members		
	Frequency	Range	Mean	Frequency	Range	Mean
Bldg. Principal	219	1-37	9.0	0	--	--
District Supt.	150	1-34	10.8	1	(2)	(2)
Board Member	3	1-8	3.3	219	1-29	5.5

UNIT II: STUDY RESULTS

The results of the survey will be presented in the same order in which the respondents encountered the questions; the earlier questions focused on the 1976-1977 self-study evaluation, while the latter questions called for policy-level recommendations. The basic results which are presented in this unit will be summarized and discussed further in Unit III: Discussion and Conclusions. Since administrators and school board members are the two groups of primary concern in this study, their responses will often be analyzed comparatively. Further, because the changes in school board involvement in self-study evaluations have greater implications for the larger districts (since the number of schools serves to multiply the level of school board work in a district), the survey results are frequently analyzed by district size.

6. Level of School Board Participation

The questionnaire began by asking the respondents to describe the level of school board involvement in the 1976-1977 evaluation (the school of interest was identified in the cover letter--see Appendix A). The responses to this question are summarized in Table 6. In most districts the school board was aware that an evaluation was taking place, were generally aware of the procedures being used, and received a copy of the final report. In very few districts did the board assist in scheduling the evaluation activities or review the performance of administrative staff as part of the evaluation. For 13 of the 15 items, the administrators more often reported that the board had been involved than board members reported such involvement. Greatest disagreement centered on whether the board had been asked to provide special

information for the evaluation study and whether they had received interim progress reports.

Table 6
Nature of School Board Involvement

	Percent Responding "Yes"		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
During the self-study evaluation:			
1 Was the school Board aware an evaluation was being conducted?	98.0	94.2	96.3
2 Was the School Board generally aware of what procedures were being used to conduct the evaluation?	92.2	80.3	87.0
3 Did the School Board assist in scheduling the evaluation activities?	17.8	16.4	17.2
4 Did the School Board assist with the development of the statement of school philosophy?	59.9	57.9	59.1
5 Did the School Board assist with the development of the statement of school objectives?	49.3	51.8	50.8
6 Did any individual School Board member serve on an evaluation working committee during the study?	35.6	23.9	30.6
7 Was the School Board asked to provide any particular information especially for the evaluation study?	42.3	23.4	34.1
8 Was the School Board asked to specify what it wanted to know as a result of the evaluation?	34.0	23.5	29.5
9 Did the School Board participate in a review of its own procedures as part of the evaluation?	36.5	33.5	35.2
10 Did the School Board rate the performance of the administrative staff as part of the evaluation?	18.9	19.4	19.1
11 Did the School Board receive interim reports on the progress of the evaluation?	68.9	55.0	62.9
12 Was the School Board asked to review preliminary findings or recommendations for their feasibility?	53.0	46.2	50.0
13 Did members of the School Board meet with the Site Visit Team to discuss the school program?	62.0	57.5	60.0
14 Were members of the School Board present to hear the report of the Site Visit Team?	62.5	59.5	61.2
15 Did the School Board receive a copy of the final evaluation report or recommendations?	95.8	87.4	92.2

A total score for this question was computed for each respondent ("yes" coded "1," "no" coded "0") and an analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether there were significantly different levels of board involvement depending on district size and role of respondent. These results are summarized in Table 7 below. (This question thus formed a 15-item scale with grand mean of 7.81, standard deviation of 3.4, and an internal consistency reliability (alpha) of .812.)

Table 7
Level of School Board Involvement by
Role and District Size

Level of Involvement: Mean Scores			
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Small Districts (1-3 schools)	9.65	8.68	9.22
Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	8.04	7.20	7.70
Large Districts (10 or more schools)	6.82	5.54	6.28
Total	8.22	7.26	7.81

Analysis of Variance					
Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Main Effects	763.16	3	254.39	25.15	.001
Role	116.12	1	116.12	11.48	.001
District Size	658.49	2	329.24	32.55	.001
Interaction	3.66	2	1.83	.18	.835
Explained	766.82	5	153.36	15.16	.001
Residual	4582.31	453	10.12		
Total	5349.13	458	11.68		

There were significant main effects, but no significant interaction. Administrators consistently rated the level of school board involvement

in these evaluations higher than did board members themselves. Furthermore, the level of school board involvement decreased within the larger districts.

7. Quality of Evaluations

Next, the respondents were asked several questions concerning the quality of the 1976-1977 evaluation. They were first asked if they were familiar with the evaluation procedures used in the study.

Table 8
Familiarity With Evaluation Procedures

	Percent Responding "Yes"		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Small Districts (1-3 schools)	97.0	71.8	86.5
Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	97.2	69.4	86.1
Large Districts (10 or more schools)	94.2	52.9	75.6

As one would expect, more administrators were aware of the evaluation procedures as were both administrators and board members in smaller districts.

Respondents were next asked what they thought of the quality of the evaluation procedures used. These data are summarized in Table 9.

Both groups were in accord that while the evaluations showed good planning and organization, they less adequately met the needs of the local school boards. Administrators and board members disagreed most about whether all relevant information had been included in the evaluation and whether it was worth the expense.

Table 9
Quality of Evaluation Procedures

	Mean Score[a]		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
To what extent would you say the evaluation:			
1 Showed good planning and organization	2.5	2.2	2.4
2 Addressed the most important school questions	2.2	1.9	2.1
3 Involved the appropriate people	2.4	2.1	2.3
4 Was technically well conducted	2.4	2.2	2.3
5 Included all relevant information and opinions	2.1	1.7	2.0
6 Had sufficient resources available	2.3	2.2	2.2
7 Was worth the effort and expense it took	2.2	1.8	2.1
8 Met the needs of the School Board	1.9	1.6	1.8

[a]"Not at all" = 0, "Somewhat" = 1, "Quite a bit" = 2, "A great deal" = 3.

Again, a total score was computed for each respondent and an analysis of variance was conducted. (This question thus formed an 8-item scale with a grand mean of 17.2, a standard deviation of 4.60, and an internal consistency reliability (alpha) of .895.) The results of the analysis of variance are displayed in Table 10.

Significant main effects, but no significant interaction was found. Administrators consistently rated the quality of the evaluation procedures higher than the board members did. Also, the larger the school district,

the higher its evaluation procedures were rated by both administrators and board members.

Table 10
Quality of Evaluation Procedures by Role and District Size

Quality of Procedures: Mean Scores			
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Small Districts (1-3 schools)	17.17	15.40	16.49
Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	18.22	15.46	17.30
Large Districts (10 or more schools)	18.73	17.03	18.20
Total	18.00	15.81	17.24

Analysis of Variance					
Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Main Effects	598.27	3	199.42	10.04	.001
Role	411.85	1	411.85	20.74	.001
District Size	152.67	2	76.34	3.84	.022
Interaction	21.93	2	10.96	.55	.576
Explained	620.20	5	124.04	6.25	.001
Residual	7984.27	402	19.86		
Total	8604.46	407	21.14		

Over 90 percent of the respondents indicated that the school board had received a copy of the final evaluation report (see Table 6 above). The respondents were next asked to evaluate the quality of the report's recommendations. First they were asked if they were familiar with the recommendations. Most administrators and board members reported being familiar with the recommendations, although fewer respondents were familiar with them in the larger districts.

Table 11
Familiarity With Evaluation Recommendations

	Percent Responding "Yes"		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Small Districts (1-3 schools)	99.0	90.8	95.4
Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	94.4	89.2	92.3
Large Districts (10 or more schools)	95.2	70.4	83.9

Respondents were asked to judge the quality of the recommendations; their responses appear in Table 12. Neither administrators nor board

Table 12
Quality of Evaluation Recommendations

	Mean Score[a]		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
To the best of your memory, would you say the recommendations:			
1 Were adequately presented to the School Board	2.0	1.9	2.0
2 Were presented to the School Board at an appropriate time of year	2.0	1.9	2.0
3 Were well thought out and justified	2.1	1.9	2.0
4 Addressed important school issues	2.1	1.8	2.0
5 Were legally and financially feasible	1.8	1.5	1.7
6 Were reasonable and practical	1.9	1.6	1.8
7 Would lead to the improvement of local education if accomplished	2.2	1.9	2.0
8 Were helpful to the School Board in setting school policy	1.4	1.2	1.3
9 Assisted the School Board in making certain specific decisions	1.4	1.2	1.3

[a] "Not at all" = 0, "Somewhat" = 1, "Quite a bit" = 2, "A great deal" = 3.

members were as positive about the quality of the evaluation recommendations as they were about the quality of the evaluation procedures (see Table 9). Both groups gave lowest marks to the utility of the recommendations in helping the school board set policy and make specific decisions.

A total score was computed and another analysis of variance was conducted. (This question therefore formed a 9-item scale with a grand mean of 16.1, a standard deviation of 5.06, and an internal consistency reliability (alpha) of .875.) The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13
Quality of Evaluation Recommendations by Role and District Size

Quality of Recommendations: Mean Scores			
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Small Districts (1-3 schools)	16.5	15.0	15.9
Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	17.6	14.2	16.2
Large Districts (10 or more schools)	16.6	15.3	16.1
Total	16.9	14.8	16.1

Analysis of Variance					
Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Main Effects	482.46	3	160.82	6.53	.001
Role	474.22	1	474.22	19.26	.001
District Size	7.23	2	3.62	.15	.863
Interaction	90.25	2	45.13	1.83	.161
Explained	572.71	5	114.54	4.65	.001
Residual	10661.81	433	24.62		
Total	11234.52	438	25.65		

There was one significant main effect and no significant interaction. Administrators consistently rated the evaluation recommendations higher than the board members did, but there were no significant differences in the quality of the recommendations across the various district sizes.

One final question related to the quality of the evaluation was asked. Respondents were asked to report how the school board had dealt with the evaluation recommendations. The responses, which are presented in Tables 14 and 15 below, suffer from substantial missing data. Since only one-half to two-thirds of the respondents answered this question, the summaries presented below should be taken as suggestive and not definitive. The mean percents sum to over 100 in all cases because

Table 14
Disposition of Evaluation Recommendations
by Role

	Mean Percent		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Percent rejected after preliminary review	21.1	22.7	21.6
Percent seriously considered but finally dropped or postponed	24.6	30.0	26.5
Percent implemented and are now being followed	33.8	35.7	34.4
Percent already implemented and accomplished	30.5	29.9	30.3

Table 15
Disposition of Evaluation Recommendations
by District Size

	Mean Percent			
	Small Districts (1-3 schools)	Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	Large Districts (10 or more schools)	Total
Percent rejected after preliminary review	23.1	23.3	16.6	21.6
Percent seriously considered but finally dropped or postponed	25.8	26.1	28.1	26.5
Percent implemented and are now being followed	33.4	34.7	35.4	34.4
Percent already implemented and accomplished	30.2	31.3	28.9	30.3

individual respondents gave answers totaling more than 100 percent. Clear conclusions are difficult with such poor data, although it appears that approximately only 60 percent of the evaluation recommendations were subsequently implemented by the school board.

8. Impediments to School Board Involvement

Respondents were next asked to indicate why, based on last year's experience, they thought school board members were not more involved in accrediting evaluations. Their responses, analyzed again by role and district size, are displayed in Tables 16 and 17 respectively.

Table 16
Impediments to Board Involvement by Role

	Mean Score[a]		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
School Boards are not more involved because:			
1 Our School Board members do not have the time	1.7	1.4	1.6
2 Greater School Board participation is not needed to successfully complete the evaluations	1.6	1.4	1.5
3 Our School Board has little to gain by being more involved	1.1	1.0	1.0
4 It is our formal district policy that the School Board not be more involved	.4	.5	.4
5 It is standard practice in our district that the School Board not be more involved	1.0	1.1	1.0
6 It is not clear what more our School Board could do in such evaluations	1.5	1.7	1.6
7 No materials or other assistance are available to help our School Board members be more involved	1.2	1.4	1.3

[a]"Definitely no" = 0, "Generally no" = 1, "Generally yes" = 2, "Definitely yes" = 3.

The three major reasons why school boards are not more involved in self-study evaluations are that:

- Board members do not have the time.
- It is not clear what more board members could do.
- Boards do not need to be more involved in order to successfully complete the evaluations.

Administrators feel more strongly that boards have little time for involvement than board members do. Notice also that the larger the

Table 17
Impediments to Board Involvement by District Size

	Mean Score[a]			
	Small Districts (1-3 schools)	Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	Large Dist. (10 or more schools)	Total
School Boards are not more involved because:				
1 Our School Board members do not have the time	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6
2 Greater School Board participation is not needed to successfully complete the evaluations	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.5
3 Our School Board has little to gain by being more involved	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0
4 It is our formal district policy that the School Board not be more involved	.4	.4	.5	.4
5 It is standard practice in our district that the School Board not be more involved	.8	1.0	1.2	1.0
6 It is not clear what more our School Board could do in such evaluations	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6
7 No materials or other assistance are available to help our School Board members be more involved	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.3

[a] "Definitely no" = 0, "Generally no" = 1, "Generally yes" = 2, "Definitely yes" = 3.

district, the more often it is standard practice for board members not to be involved in such evaluations. Finally, consider that the range of the mean scores is from .4 to 1.7; the mean responses cluster around the option "Generally No." Perhaps none of the 7 options are major reasons for low board involvement. Because of this possibility, respondents were asked to suggest other impediments to board involvement. Their responses are summarized below.* One gets the impression from the comments that follow that both administrators and board members ascribe low board involvement to the lack of initiative and interest on the part of the other group.

*Numbers in parentheses indicate number of respondents.

Responses from Small Districts (1-3 schools)

Administrators

(3) School board members were not asked to be involved; ". . . board participation was not desired."

(2) From the same district came these two responses: "BOE interested in catering to click [sic]--not to better ed[ucation]." "Our board is more concerned with personal projects."

(1) From a superintendent: "Superintendents are unfamiliar with the procedure and do not recognize the importance and value of the evaluation procedure."

Related comments:

(2) Boards should be more involved ("on committees").

(1) "Our board is fairly involved."

(1) "Our board had ample opportunity to be involved."

Board Members

(3) We were not asked to participate.

(3) "Board members are not aware of its usefulness." "Lack of sufficient familiarity with programs." "Not close enough to the problem."

(1) ". . . time is the one thing we lack."

(1) "We wish. . . more [community] participation."

Related comments:

(1) ". . . we were not wanted" but served on the committees anyway.

(1) The "teachers were very involved," so the evaluation was biased.

(1) "I. . . felt they [the faculty] were not objective enough."

Responses from Medium Districts (4-9 schools)

Responses to this question were not always germane. Following are those that were.

Administrators

(5) School boards are too apathetic to become involved in self-study evaluations; some members are interested, some are not. (Participation depends on superintendent's enthusiasm.)

(3) School boards are too busy already to become involved in self-study evaluations.

(2) The school board feels evaluations are the responsibility of the administration; school boards are a policy-making body.

(1) The school board "felt comfortable with procedures as outlined."

(1) "Our school board lives many miles, some 2,000, from school. . ."

Related comments:

(3) School boards should be more involved; school board members should serve on more committees.

(1) "They can have copies of are [sic] teacher and steering committee reports."

(1) "Our district recently completed the P.D.K. Goals and Objective[s] Study."

Board Members

(9) The bulk of responses by school board members to this question concerned the administration's unwillingness to allow the board to participate in the self-study evaluation process. Sample comments: "Board was excluded." "Lack of communication from supt. to board." "The administration did not encourage board participation." ". . . participation was inhibited and avoided." "We were not asked to be involved." "I believe. . . educational leaders believe the school boards lack the intelligence to participate. . ."

(2) Further, some school boards were unaware of the evaluation study: "Have never seen. . . reports on evaluations in last 6 years." "First I have heard about this. . ."

(1) In our district, "all school administration is the responsibility of the B.I.A. [Bureau of Indian Affairs]."

Other comments:

(1) "We felt our board was deeply involved."

(1) "Our district has an on-going K-12 evaluation."

(1) "The board should know more about the NCE before they come."

(1) ". . . these evaluation[s] could be eliminated."

(1) "There was no specific evaluation of our board by the team."

Responses from Large Districts (10 or more schools)

Administrators

(3) School leadership "perceived no need for board. . . involvement."

(2) Evaluations are not the concern of the school board.

(1) They are not interested in becoming involved.

(1) "Tradition and lack of creativity have kept the board from becoming more involved."

(1) "Board. . . feel[s] it proper to delegate. . . these details in a fairly large district."

(1) "Many board members. . . are at a loss as to what to do with what they've learned."

Related comments:

(3) "Our school board is involved." "Interested and concerned." "Members serve on committees."

(1) "A follow-up progress report should be made after 6 [and 18] months."

Other comments:

(1) "These questions require considerable bias and philosophy of school operations."

Board Members

(6) Our involvement is limited by the administration. "Administration feels the board is nothing more than a figurehead." "Our superintendent. . . doesn't like board members involved."

(2) Evaluation is a "staff function." "Board's job is to set policy."

(1) "Too many schools--large district."

(1) "Our board has never been involved in the evaluation process of individual schools."

Related comments:

(2) The board need only approve results of evaluations.

(1) "The team should interview the board at a special or regular meeting."

(1) "I do not know what is available, but feel we should be asked to participate."

Other comments:

(1) "It is difficult to respond to double negative questions."

9. Desired School Board Involvement

It is possible that administrators and board members are generally satisfied with the level of board involvement in self-study evaluations. Or, perhaps they would only increase involvement in certain areas. A series of questions were asked to determine whether greater board involvement was desired and what would likely result from increased involvement.

When asked "To what extent should Board Members be more involved in local self-study evaluations?" the mean response was 1.5 or halfway between "Somewhat" and "Quite a bit."* Although board members favored a little more involvement (mean = 1.6) than administrators (mean = 1.4), neither response evidenced an especially high interest in increased board involvement.

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*"Not at all" = 0, "Somewhat" = 1, "Quite a bit" = 2, "A great deal" = 3.

Respondents were next asked to specify the ways in which board members should be more involved in self-study evaluations. These results are displayed in Table 18 below.

Table 18
Desire for Increased Board Involvement

	Percent Responding "Yes"
	Total Respondents
Should Boards be more involved in:	
1 Planning the timing and activities of the evaluation	32.0
2 Deciding what school areas or evaluation questions should be emphasized	65.5
3 Developing the statement of school philosophy	88.1
4 Developing the statement of school objectives	81.4
5 Serving on specific working committees during the evaluation	66.0
6 Providing specific information for use in the evaluation	65.5
7 Reviewing administrative and policy-making activities, including its own	96.4
8 Reviewing preliminary report for accuracy and comprehensiveness	68.5
9 Providing information to the Site Visit Team	72.0
10 Reviewing preliminary recommendations for feasibility	89.3

Both administrators and board members agreed that boards should be increasingly involved in several areas, especially in reviewing administrative and policy-making activities. A total score for this question was computed for each respondent ("Yes" coded "1," "No" coded "0") and an analysis of variance was conducted to test for role or district size differences in the responses. These results appear in Table 19 below. (This question formed a 10-item scale with grand mean of 7.2, standard deviation of 2.10, and an internal consistency reliability (alpha) of .681.)

Table 19
Desire for Increased Board Involvement by Role and District Size

Desire for Increased Involvement: Mean Scores

	Administrators	Board Members	Total
Small Districts (1-3 schools)	7.90	7.79	7.85
Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	7.12	7.62	7.31
Large Districts (10 or more schools)	6.23	6.69	6.44
Total	7.14	7.39	7.25

Analysis of Variance

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Main Effects	149.36	3	49.79	12.18	.001
Role	6.72	1	6.72	1.64	.201
District Size	142.64	2	71.32	17.44	.001
Interaction	8.65	2	4.33	1.06	.348
Explained	158.01	5	31.60	7.73	.001
Residual	1803.42	441	4.09		
Total	1961.44	446	4.40		

Administrators and board members did not substantially differ on their opinions, although there was a significant district size effect. In the larger districts, the respondents identified fewer areas where boards ought to be more involved.

Therefore, there was some interest in increasing board involvement; did anyone feel that boards should be less involved in self-study evaluations? In response to such a question, only 26 administrators and 19 school board members said "Yes." When asked to specify which areas should have less board involvement, the following comments were offered:*

Responses from Small Districts (1-3 schools)

Administrators

(3) School board members should not be involved in administrative procedures of such evaluations.

(2) "Curriculum scope and sequence." "Curriculum problems."

(2) School board members should not be involved "in directing the evaluation," or in "technical details."

(1) They should not be involved in "evaluation of staff."

(1) They should not be involved in evaluating "day-to-day procedures."

Other comments:

(1) "A board should want an unbiased report without trying to influence the outcome at all."

(1) "School boards should be. . . involved in every phase of the evaluation to the fullest extent possible."

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*Numbers in parenthesis indicate number of respondents.

Board Members

(1) "I don't believe a board member should be involved at all in the actual evaluation."

(1) School Board members should be less involved in "serving on specific working committees during evaluation."

(1) School board members should be less involved in "local governance."

(1) School board members should be less involved in "planning and timing the activities."

Responses from Medium Districts (4-9 schools)

Administrators

(3) School boards should be less involved in the evaluation of "curriculum and program development."

(3) School boards should be less involved in the evaluation of "personnel," "personalities," and "placement of personnel."

(3) School boards should not be involved in the "mechanics" ("general planning") of the evaluation.

(2) "Administration should be allowed to conduct the evaluation." "Evaluation is an administrative tool and function."

Other comments:

(1) "I think they should be totally involved."

Some respondents obviously misread the question, thinking they were to specify areas where MORE involvement is desirable:

(1) "Board members should head steering committees to see that information is gathered and to review such information and recommendations."

(1) "Make and enforce policy."

Board Members

(2) School board members "should stay in the background."

(2) School board members should be less involved in evaluation of "administrative procedures" ("faculty evaluation, program review").

(1) "Much of the timing and activities of the evaluation should be left to the administration."

Misreading the question elicited this suggestion for greater involvement:

(1) "Having a commitment to act on the feasible recommendations."

Responses from Large Districts (10 or more schools)

Administrators

(2) School board members should be less involved in "planning activities of evaluation."

Other comments:

(1) "In a large school district the board would not have the time to devote to the self-study."

School Board

(4) School boards should be less involved in evaluation of "building level" "administration procedures." "Board does not tell the professionals how to teach."

(1) School boards should be less involved in evaluation of "curricula, cognitive models, inservice training."

(1) ". . .board member could be a negative factor in group discussions because some people feel inhibited. . ."

The following responses indicate a likely misreading of the question, suggesting greater involvement or proper role of school boards:

(1) Board members should observ[e] and set or revise policies affected."

(1) "Follow up to see if recommendations are actually implemented."

(1) "Providing budget commitments and approval of short and long range plans to implement 'improvement' programs."

(1) "Some of the above [10 activities listed in Table 18] should go thru executive team to the board."

In order to understand at a general policy level just how much school boards should participate in self-study evaluations, respondents

were asked to characterize the proper level of board involvement. These data are displayed in Tables 20 and 21.

Table 20
Proper School Board Involvement by Role

	Percent Selecting Option		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
1 MINIMAL PARTICIPATION. School Boards should be aware of the proceedings, but primarily just review and act on the final recommendations	12.1	14.0	13.0
2 SLIGHT PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should provide any relevant information upon request and periodically review the progress of the evaluation.	19.5	23.4	21.2
3 MODERATE PARTICIPATION. In addition the above, School Boards should participate in planning the evaluation and in major steps like developing the school philosophy and objectives.	44.5	39.7	42.4
4 FULL PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should be actively involved in all phases of the evaluation including working on committees, and conducting preliminary reviews of all findings and recommendations.	23.9	22.9	23.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most administrators and board members favor moderate board participation, although more board members than administrators favor slight or minimal participation. Also, notice that more respondents favor slight or minimal participation in the larger districts. In fact, in districts with 10 or more schools, over 46 percent of the respondents favor only slight or minimal board participation.

Table 21
Proper School Board Involvement by District Size

	Percent Selecting Option			
	Small Districts (1-3 schools)	Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	Large Districts (10 or more schools)	Total
1 MINIMAL PARTICIPATION. School boards should be aware of the proceedings, but primarily just review and act on the final recommendations.	7.3	12.1	20.4	13.0
2 SLIGHT PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should provide any relevant information upon request and periodically review the progress of the evaluation.	12.7	24.7	26.5	21.2
3 MODERATE PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should participate in planning the evaluation and in major steps like developing the school philosophy and objectives.	48.5	37.4	41.5	42.4
4 FULL PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should be actively involved in all phases of the evaluation including working on committees, and conducting preliminary reviews of all findings and recommendations.	31.5	25.8	11.6	23.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Finally, respondents were asked what would probably happen if school boards became more involved in evaluations. Their responses are summarized in Tables 22 and 23.

Both administrators and board members felt that negative outcomes were slightly less likely than positive outcomes; even the positive outcomes were only considered to be somewhat likely. When district size is taken into account, the positive outcomes again appear more likely than the negative outcomes, but the likelihood of negative outcomes increases as the districts become larger.

Table 22
Results of Increased Involvement by Role

	Mean Score[a]		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
If School Boards became more involved:			
NEGATIVE OUTCOMES:			
Such evaluations would take more time to complete	1.0	1.0	1.0
School staff and administrators would resent the School Board intrusion	.5	.7	.6
Other School Board work would suffer from less attention	.5	.4	.5
POSITIVE OUTCOMES:			
There would be greater community and school support for the evaluations	1.0	.9	.9
More legally and financially feasible recommendations would result	.8	.9	.9
More evaluation recommendations would be implemented	1.0	1.0	1.0

[a]"Not Likely" = 0, "Somewhat likely" = 1, "Highly likely" = 2.

Table 23
Results of Increased Involvement by District Size

	Mean Score[a]			
	Small Districts (1-3 schools)	Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	Large Districts (10 or more schools)	Total
If School Boards became more involved:				
NEGATIVE OUTCOMES				
Such evaluations would take more time to complete	.9	1.0	1.1	1.0
School staff and administrators would resent the School Board intrusion	.5	.6	.7	.6
Other School Board work would suffer from less attention	.3	.5	.6	.5
POSITIVE OUTCOMES				
There would be greater community and school support for the evaluations	1.0	1.0	.9	.9
More legally and financially feasible recommendations would result	.9	.9	.8	.9
More evaluation recommendations would be implemented	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

[a]"Not likely" = 0, "Somewhat likely" = 1, "Highly likely" = 2.

Respondents were also asked to specify any other outcomes that they felt would likely accompany increased board involvement. Their comments were as follows:*

Responses from Small Districts (1-3 schools)

Administrators

POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

(3) "The board would better understand the educational needs of the school," and "total school operation."

(2) The board would have a "better understanding of the actual evaluation process" and "purpose."

(2) There would be more support in implementation of needs.

*Numbers in parentheses indicate number of respondents.

(1) "Possible realizations some recommendations need to be implemented."

(1) "Communication would be better established between teachers and board members."

(1) "A more true and accurate final evaluation report."

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES:

(1) "Could result in more school board dominance of all school affairs."

OTHER COMMENTS:

(2) Board members do not have time or "do not wish to take the time" to be involved in the evaluation process.

Board Members

POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

(5) School boards would have a greater understanding and awareness of the evaluation and educational programs ("good learning experience").

(2) Staff, administrators and school board members "would be working TOGETHER. . . for betterment of school."

(1) "It would tend to become a more unbiased evaluation."

(1) "Maybe more thought would be taken to the size of the school, monies, etc."

OTHER COMMENTS:

(1) "There are areas that need improvement but due to finances it becomes impossible and everyone on the team knows it." The team should recommend only those important changes which can be implemented.

Responses from Medium Districts (4-9 schools)

Administrators

POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

(7) School boards would have better understanding of the schools' inner workings."

(4) School boards would "take the evaluation more seriously," know "what preparation it takes," and have a "more realistic idea of [its] function."

(2) "Faculty, administration, school board rapport may improve." It would involve them in mutual problem-solving.

(1) "More relevant recommendations would be forthcoming."

(1) "Tremendous in-service possibilities for board members."

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

(1) "Evaluation would not be as valid."

(1) "People might not want to be on school boards."

(1) "Slanted evaluation."

(1) "Danger of the evaluation becoming board dominated."

Board Members

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

(4) "Board would become more aware of what's going on in the schools," and of "the strengths and weaknesses in the program."

(3) Boards would be better able to assign priorities, "more knowledgeable of evaluated areas," and the "evaluation process."

(1) "Board members would do a better job."

(1) "Things that have been neglected would probably see action."

(1) "Community acceptance, especially small communitys [sic]."

(1) "Realize differences between policies and rules; between administrative and board functions."

(1) "Effective and efficient evaluations."

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES:

(1) "Staff would slack off their respective responsibility [sic] and expect the board to initiate."

OTHER COMMENTS

(1) "We have a very aware board. . . but you can only do so much."

(3) Evaluations should be done by "professionals," not boards (the sentiments of two board members from one district); "the whole purpose of evaluation is to get an outside opinion."

Responses from Large Districts (10 or more schools)

Administrators

POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

(2) There would be "greater understanding of school and its mission" and of [its] "problems."

(2) "Better board-staff relationship"; "staff would profit from personal interaction with board members."

(1) "The board could act from. . . first-hand information."

(1) "Communication increase."

(1) "Change in district division between policy making and administration."

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES:

(1) "The school boards would tend to become mini-superintendents."

(1) "Over-zealous individuals could be more eager to get involved in the implementation of policy -- administration."

(1) "Increase role deycreptencies [sic] between supt. and board."

OTHER COMMENTS:

(1) "Depends on the board. . . whether or not they want to run the schools vs. having the superintendent do so."

(1) Board "members do not have time; other more important work would not be accomplished."

Board Members

POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

(5) School board members would be better informed and be able to make better decisions.

(1) "Board members would feel more important."

(1) "Evaluations could be more meaningful to some."

(1) Board members' input could result in more workable report recommendations.

(1) "Cohesiveness of programs as well as relevance."

(1) "More outcomes would be related to education rather than work conditions."

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES:

(1) "If school board members can't agree among themselves you will have a hell of a mess."

(1) "Subjective opinions of individual board members. . . could affect or confuse the outcome."

(1) "School board members who would have. . . time would or could be dangerous if involved on an individual basis. . ."

10. Desired School Board Assistance

If one did wish to increase the level of school board involvement in self-study evaluations, what services would need to be provided to local districts, how should these services be provided, and what group ought to provide the service? These issues were the focus of the last three items on the questionnaire.

First the respondents were asked what kinds of services would be most useful to school boards.

Table 24
Useful Services for Increased Involvement by Role

	Percent Respondents Selecting Option[a]		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
1 Self-instructional materials	56.2	47.2	52.3
2 An inservice training system available upon request	58.7	49.1	54.5
3 Technical assistance capability such as local consultation by experienced school board members in the region	31.1	30.4	30.8
4 Regular inservice training for all board members	47.3	38.3	43.5
5 Other	1.4	4.7	2.8

[a]Percents total more than 100 since multiple responses were allowed.

Table 25
Useful Services for Increased Involvement
by District Size

	Percent Respondents Selecting Option[a]			
	Small Districts (1-3 schools)	Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	Large Dist. (10 or more schools)	Total
1 Self-instructional materials	52.6	48.3	56.8	52.3
2 An inservice training system available upon request	59.1	56.7	46.6	54.5
3 Technical assistance capability such as local consultation by experienced school board members in the region	33.3	30.3	28.4	30.8
4 Regular inservice training for all board members	47.4	46.1	35.8	43.5
5 Other	1.8	3.4	3.4	2.8

[a]Percents total more than 100 since multiple responses were allowed.

Self-instructional materials and available inservice training were the most popular services, although more administrators than board members thought they would be useful to school boards. In general, all districts agreed as to which services would be most useful, regardless of district size. A few respondents offered suggestions of other needed services:

Administrator Comments

"Require all new board members to attend training school."

"Number 4 [regular inservice training for all board members] must be mandatory."

"A way of providing more than 24 hours a day for the board members. (sorry about the tone of this.)"

"None."

"Provide training for the superintendent and building principal."

Board Member Comments

"You also believe most board members lack intelligence."

"More instruction at school board conventions--especially state meetings."

"Should not be increased."

"Brief explanation of purposes and invitations to attend whenever possible with schedule of activities."

"All of above depend on the content."

"Entire planning meeting with local staff and boards."

"Babysitters."

"Inservice for you, teams, admin. and faculty to reduce hubris."

"Also training from knowledgeable administrators."

"Board members do not know what accreditation is--or why have it (North Central or State) and what should we do with it in terms of budget and admin. goals."

"Lay people (board members) probably should not be involved to this depth."

"None."

"I do not believe it necessary to evaluate the school boards."

Respondents were next asked how these services should be provided to boards. As can be seen in Table 26 below, administrators and board members disagreed on the best mode of service delivery. Administrators favored providing such assistance as part of the accreditation process, while board members favored making such training available upon request.

Table 26
Favored Modes of Delivering School Board Service

	Percent Respondents Selecting Option	
	Administrators	Board Members
As part of the accrediting evaluation forms and procedural guidelines	40.0	27.1
As separate services available for school boards to request as needed	34.7	50.2
As separate services available to school administrators for their use in working with school boards	25.3	21.2
Other	0.0	1.0

The following comments were offered under the category of "Other."

Administrator Comments

"Number one [as part of accreditation guidelines] must be mandatory."

"Not."

"I feel boards should involve themselves only as much as they want to. They can find direction to do this without creating more work by having extra training programs. Inservice appears to be an unnecessary expense."

Board Member Comments

"Information seminars."

"State School Board Meetings."

"Anyway - but not via superintendent. . ."

"As a specific step in the preliminary plans of the study--with an update step and a final approval step."

"None."

Last of all, respondents were asked to identify those groups that ought to provide these services to school boards. Tables 27 and 28 illustrate that most respondents felt that accrediting associations, followed by state school boards associations and state departments of education should provide such services. Although there were role and district size differences, such differences did not change the relative order of the most appropriate service agencies.

Table 27
Favored Service Agencies by Role

	Percent Respondents Selecting Option[a]		
	Administrators	Board Members	Total
State departments of education	44.7	46.9	45.6
Regional and state accrediting associations	69.0	58.9	64.7
State school board associations	46.8	52.2	49.1
Universities and colleges	8.5	13.4	10.5
State administrators' associations	22.9	14.8	19.5
Other	2.5	2.4	2.4

[a]Percents total more than 100 since multiple responses were allowed.

Table 28
Favored Service Agencies by District Size

	Percent Respondents Selecting Option[a]			
	Small Districts (1-3 schools)	Medium Districts (4-9 schools)	Large Dist. (10 or more schools)	Total
State departments of education	47.9	46.0	42.7	45.6
Regional and state accrediting associations	62.7	61.5	70.7	64.7
State school board associations	54.4	46.0	46.7	49.1
Universities and colleges	8.9	13.8	8.7	10.5
State administrators' associations	18.9	21.8	17.3	19.5
Other	1.2	3.4	2.7	2.4

[a]Percents total more than 100 since multiple responses were allowed.

The following suggestions were made under the "Other" category:

Administrator Comments

"State Committee Members."

"Local secondary administrators."

"Educational Service Units."

"As a requirement for administrative certification."

"School Boards Association." (2)

"Local administrators."

Board Member Comments

"School Directors Association."

"Teachers' Association and citizens committees."

"National School Board Association."

"County Directors of ASBA."

"We already receive input from the above groups."

"You."

"90% aren't qualified to supply anything."

"District's own resources and administration."

"None."

11. Comments

The back page of the questionnaire was left blank and respondents were encouraged to use it to make any additional comments they cared to about the role of school boards in self-study evaluations. What follows is a content analysis and summary of those comments some of which repeat earlier points, others raise new issues. The comments are organized here under the following outline:

I Self-Study Evaluation
- A. Necessity
- B. Implementation
- C. Quality

II School Board - Administrator Relationships
- A. Working Relations

III School Board Involvement
- A. Involvement: What Ought to Be
  - 1. Evaluations should involve school board
  - 2. Evaluations should NOT involve school board
- B. Involvement: What Was
  - 1. Degree of satisfaction
  - 2. Level of involvement
- C. Involvement: What Hinders It
  - 1. School boards untrained; unqualified
  - 2. School boards too busy
  - 3. School board involvement not allowed or encouraged
  - 4. School board lacked interest or commitment

IV Miscellaneous
- A. Particular District Explanations
- B. Personal Comments
  - 1. About the questionnaire
  - 2. Miscellaneous

I Self-Study Evaluations*

A. Necessity

Administrators:

(1) One superintendent wrote, "A school board doesn't really view the evaluation as always necessary" because the state education department has updated its curriculum guidelines. "They also believe they can do such evaluations alone on a year-to-year basis."

School Board

(3) Evaluations "should have merit, but too often it becomes self-serving" and creates "confrontation and agitation. . . is there [then] a real net gain for the school system?" A second school board member said, "[It] sounds great, but it seemed a 'housekeeping' operation rather than a policy aid." A third said simply, "Accreditations at this point do not swing much weight."

B. Implementation

Administrators:

(2) A principal stated that the evaluation would be more useful "if the school district had the means to implement. . . the recommendations of the visiting team." A superintendent charged teachers with the responsibility for implementing changes.

School Board:

(4) Similar remarks expressing concern over their districts' financial inabilities to implement recommendations came from three school board members, while a third asserted that it is a school board's responsibility to evaluate and to implement the recommendations within the district's means.

C. Quality

Administrators:

(0)

School Board:

(5) Although no administrators commented on the quality of the evaluation conducted in their district, five school board members had critical comments. One called the evaluation "self-serving," two claimed that the evaluation "failed to provide any useful product"

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*Numbers in parentheses refer to number of responses in that category.

("good specific recommendations"), a fourth said it "failed to show some very real inadequacies," and the fifth asserted that a school's rating has nothing to do with its "effectiveness in meeting. . . [the] needs of the students."

II School Board - Administrator Relationships

A. Working Relations

Administrators:

(2) Two principals commented on school board - administrator relations, one saying that the degree of school board involvement depends upon the "trust relationship" which exists between the board, administration, and school staff. The second asserted that pressure from the administration forced changes in the evaluation's final report to the school board.

School Board:

(2) Opposite ideas were expressed by two school board members: "the responses reflect a board - administrative 'partnership'" versus "school boards are being dominated by superintendents". . . "sad state when boards can be buffaloed!"

III School Board Involvement

A. Involvement: What Ought to Be

1. Evaluations should involve school board

Administrators:

(15) While nine administrators stated in various ways that school boards should be very much involved ("an integral part") of self-study evaluations, four others specified that school board members should serve on pertinent committees. Another administrator encouraged board participation, especially in implementation or rejection of recommendations, while another said that the more school board members know of the problems the better able to assist they are.

School Board:

(8) Eight school board members said that boards ought to be more involved with evaluations, to monitor their progress, approve the statement of school philosophy and policy, and evaluate and implement the recommendations.

2. Evaluations should NOT involve school board

Administrators:

(7) Three administrators stated that school boards should "stay out of building-level administration," since they are strictly a "policy-making body," and two more added that school board members are too busy to become involved. A principal pointed out, in addition, that school board members "will involve themselves in evaluation activities to the extent of their interest and capability." The final administrator's comment was that school board involvement was not as important as the school itself doing a better job of internal organization, prioritizing and following up on specific needs.

School Board:

(4) Four school board members echoed the sentiments of the administrators, asserting that "school administration is best qualified to evaluate itself."

B. Involvement: What Was

1. Degree of satisfaction

Administrators:

(4) Four administrators' comments reflected satisfaction with the school board involvement: "the school board in this evaluation was very helpful and cooperative. . ." And the "necessary parties [were involved] the right amount of time and [in] the right areas."

School Board

(2) Two school board members expressed satisfaction, one because of a "present high level of involvement," but the other because his board had "great confidence in [its] administration" and consequently did not feel any need for greater involvement.

2. Level of involvement

Administrators:

(10) Four administrators indicated high school board involvement by stating that their school boards were involved in the self-study evaluations by serving on various committees, while two stated simply that their boards were very involved. Four others, however, indicated that their boards were only minimally involved or not involved at all.

School Board:

(2) Only two school board members commented on their board's involvement, one expressing a greater awareness of evaluation procedures since the study was conducted, but the other remarked lamely "apparently the evaluation does not require the board be more involved [or] develop any familiarity with [regional] requirements and recommendations."

C. Involvement: What Hinders It

1. School boards untrained, unqualified

Administrators:

(2) Two administrators asserted that school boards are not well trained and are unaware of their appropriate role.

School Board:

(4) Twice as many school board members as administrators felt that boards are "poorly equipped to do this job," since they are "comprised of lay people who generally have no background in education," and one school board member suggested there be annual accrediting evaluation workshops, while a fourth recommended advisory committees to "provide the board with information and direction."

2. School boards too busy

Administrators:

(14) Ten administrators pointed out that school board members are simply too busy to become involved in self-study evaluations, needing to concentrate rather on district financial and policy matters. An eleventh added that part of a superintendent's job is to "harbor the time of school board members" so that they will want to continue serving on the board. The remaining three responses related size of district to school board involvement; "Board involvement in smaller districts probably would be acceptable." In a bigger district, school board involvement may simply be "a desirable option."

School Board:

(5) Three school board members expressed a lack of time to participate in evaluation activities--"too much is being loaded on non-[paid] school board members." Two more added that there is no time to be involved when the district is very large ("We have 120+ schools!") or growing very rapidly ("from 5-700 to the 2,000 plus. . . and growing daily").

3. School board involvement not allowed or encouraged

Administrators:

(2) One principal reported that the board participation "was greatly limited by the superintendent," while a superintendent stated, "We were informed the report was the property of the building principal. The involvement of the board and superintendent was only courtesy involvement."

School Board:

(8) Typical of the eight school board responses was this: "I saw no role whatsoever for our board. . . have not heard any presentation. . . in order to respond." And this: "the board didn't get ask[ed] to participate." One school board member asserted, "the local building administration needs to take a more active role in requesting this involvement." Another felt that "the [self-study evaluation] forms should include a place for boards to take a more active role. . ." In a different vein, one school board member reported that his board "did not participate because by doing so we felt we might influence the evaluation. . . [but] we, the board, felt we were the victims of some unfair results."

4. School board lacked interest or commitment

Administrators:

(4) No school board members expressed a lack of interest in evaluation procedures, but four administrators perceived such a lack: "The board accepted the report enthusiastically and then proceeded to forget the whole thing." "There is a definite lack of commitment on the part of the boards." "We had no board member here during the. . . evaluation, . . . dinner of staff and team review members, . . . [or] exit review." "Our school board did not take an active part. . . [and] will not be very active under the present set-up."

School Board:

(0)

IV Miscellaneous Responses

A. Particular district explanations

Administrators:

(5) Five administrators elaborated upon circumstances in their particular districts which they felt had a bearing on their survey responses. Three concerned

schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs or boarding schools. One explained that his vocational school was evaluated using an instrument designed for non-vocational schools. A final superintendent's response explained that the evaluation report's implementation was hampered by turnover in administrative personnel--"sixth superintendent in eleven years."

School Board:

(2) One school board member complained that in his district "too much time was spent on personal complaints of little consequence to the school," and in a similar complaint, a second school board member revealed that staff friction hindered implementation of evaluation recommendations.

B. Personal Comments

1. About the questionnaire

Administrators:

(1) "Some of your questions were worded in the negative and very hard to understand."

School Board

(2) "This is a very good questionnaire."
"I hate questionnaires and rarely reply."

2. Miscellaneous

Administrators:

(2) "If this survey is for the purpose of finding some areas for regional labs to become involved in. . . you are out of place." "Because the summary information has just recently been completed, I don't believe school board members would have been able to answer the questionnaire with any detailed knowledge about the results of the study."

School Board:

(5) Three school board members just mentioned that they were either no longer on the board or a new board member. Two others apologized for their delayed responses.

UNIT III: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Review of Results

The previous unit contains an extensive collection of survey results, statistical analysis, and respondent comments. It is difficult, however, to extract an overall picture of the results from such a detailed account. Therefore, the major survey results are highlighted in this section, to be used as the basis of the recommendations made in the following section.

What Was the Nature of School Board Participation in the Self-Study Evaluations?

- School Boards were almost always aware that such evaluations were taking place, what procedures were being used, and they received copies of the final report. Infrequently did boards assist in scheduling evaluation activities or rate the administrative staff. Occasionally board members served on evaluation working committees or were asked what they wanted to know as a result of the evaluation.

- Administrators uniformly perceived the level of board involvement to be higher than board members perceived it to be.

- In the larger districts, the school boards were less and less involved in such evaluations.

What Did Administrators and Board Members Think of the Quality of the Self-Study Evaluations?

- Administrators were more aware of actual evaluation procedures than board members, though both groups were less aware in the larger districts than their counterparts in the smaller districts.

- Both administrators and board members agreed that their self-study evaluations were well planned, technically well conducted and involved the appropriate people, but they also agreed that the evaluations less satisfactorily met the needs of the local school board.

- Administrators consistently rated the quality of the evaluation procedures higher than did board members.

- The larger the school district, the higher its evaluation procedures were rated by both administrators and board members.

- Most administrators and board members were familiar with study recommendations, although fewer board members in the large districts were familiar with them.

- Neither administrators nor board members were as positive about the quality of the evaluation recommendations as they were about the quality of the evaluation procedures. Both groups gave lowest marks to the utility of the recommendations in helping boards set policy or make specific decisions.

- Administrators consistently rated the quality of the evaluation recommendations higher than did board members.

- Although the observation is based on incomplete data, it appears that only about 60 percent of all study recommendations are even implemented.

Why Are Board Members Not More Involved In Self-Study Evaluations?

- The primary reasons for the lack of greater involvement is that (a) board members do not have the time, (b) it is not clear what more board members could do, and (c) greater involvement is not needed for successful completion of the evaluations.

- Administrators feel more strongly that boards have little time for greater involvement than board members do.

- Respondent comments reveal that both administrators and board members often ascribe low board involvement to the lack of initiative and interest on the part of the other group.

What Level of School Board Involvement In Self-Study Evaluations Is Desired?

- There is some support, though not an excessive amount, for increased board involvement, with both administrators and board members indicating the need for increased board involvement in reviewing administrative and policy-making activities, preliminary evaluation recommendations and school philosophy.

- In the larger districts, both administrators and board members identified fewer areas where boards ought to be more involved.

- A small number of administrators and board members thought that boards ought to be less involved in self-study evaluations.

- Most administrators and board members favor moderate board participation, although a few more board members than administrators favor slight or minimal participation.

- In the larger districts more administrators and board members favor slight or minimal levels of board participation.

- Respondents indicate that negative outcomes are a little less likely to occur from increased board involvement than positive outcomes, although even positive outcomes are only somewhat likely.

- Negative outcomes are more likely to occur from increased board participation in large districts than in small districts.

What Type of Assistance Should Be Provided to Increase School Board Participation In Self-Study Evaluations?

- Regardless of district size, self-instructional materials and "on call" inservice training were judged to be of most use in increasing board involvement. (More administrators than board members thought they would be of use to school boards though.)

- Administrators and board members disagreed on how best to provide such services to boards. Administrators favored providing such assistance as part of the accreditation process, while board members favored making such training available upon request.

- Regardless of district size, both administrators and board members felt that such services should be provided by accrediting associations, state school boards associations, and state departments of education, in that order.

13. Recommendations

Based on the foregoing survey results and on widespread phone and mail communication with administrators and school board members in the participating districts, it is possible to make several recommendations concerning the need for, and the means of, increasing local school board participation in self-study, accreditation evaluations.

1. ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN SELF-STUDY EVALUATIONS.

A concerted attempt needs to be made to increase school board involvement based on the observations that:

- The utility of high levels of board participation can be argued on several grounds (see Section I: Study Objectives).

- Administrators and board members agree that current evaluations are not meeting the needs of boards, nor helping them resolve policy issues or make specific decisions.

- Many evaluation recommendations are never implemented by local boards.

- The majority of administrators and board members indicate some level of support for increased board involvement.

- Administrators and board members feel that positive outcomes are more likely to result from increased board participation than negative outcomes.

2. ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE BOARD INVOLVEMENT SHOULD BE OF THE FOLLOWING NATURE:

TARGETED PRIMARILY FOR SMALLER DISTRICTS

- Larger districts express less of a need for, and less time for increased board involvement.

- Smaller districts are less satisfied with the quality of their evaluation procedures.

- Smaller districts identified a larger number of areas where boards ought to be more involved than did larger districts; larger districts favoring slight or minimal board participation.

- Negative outcomes are deemed more likely to occur from increased board participation in large districts than in small districts.

FOCUSED ON INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN ONLY A FEW AREAS

- Board members have little extra time to devote to self-study evaluations.

- Administrators and board members agree that increased involvement is most needed in reviewing administrative and policy making activities, reviewing preliminary evaluation recommendations, and assisting in the development of school philosophy.

- Many board members in large districts favor minimal or slight participation--they need assistance in using what little time they have most efficiently.

- Since it is not yet clear to either administrators or board members what more boards could do, a comprehensive involvement plan seems unwarranted.

DELIVERED IN THE MANNER MOST AGREEABLE TO PARTICIPANTS

- Regardless of district size, administrators and board members favor self-instructional materials and "on call" inservice training systems.

- Services should be provided as a part of the accreditation process (administrators' choice) or made available upon request (board members' choice).

- Services should be provided principally by accrediting associations and secondarily by state school boards associations and state departments of education.

3. ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE BOARD INVOLVEMENT SHOULD BE PREDICATED ON THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS

ADMINISTRATOR - BOARD MEMBER ROLE DIFFERENCES

- Very few administrators and board members have ever served in the other role, they have had little opportunity to view school problems from the other's perspective.

- Both administrators and board members often ascribe low board involvement to the lack of initiative and interest on the part of the other group.

- Administrators see the boards as being more involved, and having less time than board members perceive.

- Administrators are more aware of the evaluation procedures and consistently rate the procedures and evaluation recommendations higher than do board members.

- Administrators and board members disagree on how assistance to increase board participation should be provided.

SMALL DISTRICT - LARGE DISTRICT DIFFERENCES

- Administrators and board members in small districts are more involved in the evaluations, more aware of study procedures and study recommendations.

- Administrators and board members in larger districts rate their evaluation procedures higher than do their counterparts in smaller districts.

- There is no difference in the perceived quality of the evaluation recommendations across the smaller to larger districts.

- More administrators and board members in larger districts favor slight or minimal board participation, than in smaller districts.

- Negative outcomes are seen as more likely from increased board participation in larger than in small districts.

LOCAL DIFFERENCES

- Local district differences, which may not be compatible with the generalized picture given above, must be considered in the actual delivery of services.

- Anyone delivering school board assistance should be sensitive to the range of local conditions and attitudes, as reflected in the following comments.

1. I am sorry but I can't be of help in this study.

Having been on the board only one year, I am not familiar with this evaluation & was told that it was done before I came on the board.

However, I am very interested in learning more about this evaluation & how often it is done. Also in the results of this questionnaire,

When was this evaluation last done in [our district]?

I definitely feel that School Boards should be involved in such an evaluation.

I also believe that if we School Board Members don't get our rears in gear that the state & Federal Govts will & then there will be no local control at all.

Thank you.

2. Approximately 3 years previous we participated in contract accreditation with the state. The faculty & administration spent a great deal of time for 2 years working on this project along with several other district & the [regional educational service agency]. We spent approx. $500,000.00. This project was almost a total waste of time. We have a good System because we have a good administration & rapport between the teachers & administration & board. We do not need this material, and if something like this is going to cost time & money. Please keep it away from [our district].

Yours Truly -

3. I was critical of this entire process at its beginning. But because it was given a completely free hand & full cooperation and because it was guided by but not controlled by teachers - Parents - young adults - former school board members - a very excellent cross section of our community - as members of our committees took a serious attitude and worked most efficiently.

The Boards responsibility is mainly what will be done to improve our school. Follow-up in prior years seems to questionable. These evaluations could all be done away with if we fail to take action as needed. This is the big weakness to the entire set-up. There must be an accountability to these people who have done this study. As far as I know - there is none required.

4. The School Boards and School Accrediting Evaluations report has been received by [our] District. As President of our Board of School Trustees, I have taken the opportunity to review your evaluation instrument. The size of our District, and the present administrative organization, has prompted me not to respond to the individual items, but to send this correspondence as a way of answering the questions that were posed.

During the past ten-year period, [our] District has experienced a rapid population growth pattern, We have, through public support, been able to open a number of new schools and, to date, we provide educational opportunities for 85,000 students in over 100 educational facilities. Fifteen (15) of these sites are designed for secondary educational programs.

With our growth, the Board of School Trustees has been active in advising our administrators of the need for yearly evaluations of school programs and operations. A part of this in-depth evaluation system is the Northwest Accrediting reports which are compiled annually, and the self-evaluation conducted within each ten-year period.

Our Superintendent has read and signed the evaluation reports; however, the Board members have not been directly involved with the Northwest Accrediting activities from an individual school basis. Reports on accreditation are provided to our Board on request, and, until there is an observed need within our District, it would be our practice to continue with this operation which allows Board members an opportunity to obtain information on accreditation without the direct involvement of our Board reviewing reports from each of our secondary schools.

We feel this system has been most satisfactory, and I would hope this letter will provide a response for your survey submitted to our District.

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UNIT IV: STUDY SUMMARY

The following unit contains a summary of the first three units. This summary was prepared, as required under the research grant, in order to have a version of the study report suitable for journal publication.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS IN SCHOOL SELF-STUDY EVALUATIONS

School boards have traditionally played only a minor role in school self-study evaluations. The involvement of school boards (i.e., boards of control variously called boards of education, boards of trustees, school committees, or school boards) in the evaluation process has generally been limited to meeting with the accreditation team to hear their findings and to receiving a copy of the final evaluation report from the superintendent. Board members minimally participate in the planning or conduct of the actual self-study activities.

Master (1969) reports that most of the board members in the 57 schools he investigated reported being aware of the self-study evaluation, but not personally involved in it. Ironically, board members indicated greater involvement in the accreditation team visit, while the superintendents, principals, and school staffs all judged the self-study phase to be the most helpful part of the evaluation process.

Why school boards are so little involved in school self-study evaluations is not clear. It is possible to argue from at least four different perspectives that school boards ought to have a major role in such studies: (a) the formal responsibilities of school boards, (b) the representational nature of school board members, (c) the need to improve school board operations themselves, and (d) the pragmatic constraints in improving school operations.

- School boards bear the formal, legal, financial, and political responsibility for school operations. As Manlove (1967) points out, whenever the school board makes policy decisions it is in essence evaluating the school and making judgments about the nature and quality

of its operations. It is puzzling, therefore, that school boards should play such a minor role in the most comprehensive evaluations of the schools over which they have primary responsibility.

- School board members are elected as the official representatives of the community in educational matters. Although parents are occasionally included in school evaluation activities, there is generally no systematic representation of community attitudes in such activities as the specification of school philosophy and objectives. Community attitudes ought to be reflected in the school evaluation work through the community's elected representatives, the members of the local school board.

- With the increasing complexity of school operations, school boards need to periodically reassess their own operating procedures. School boards need to conduct their own self-study evaluations to address such concerns as (a) how are school issues being brought to the board's attention, (b) is the board being presented with alternative plans of action or only go/no-go options, and (c) is the board gathering sufficient background information before proceeding with difficult policy issues. School board operating procedures could be made more efficient and responsive if board members were more involved in the entire school review process.

- Douglass (1963) argues that one of the major outcomes of self-study accreditation evaluations is that they enable school administrators to interest school board members in ways of improving school operations. Similarly, Littrell and Bailey (1976) argue that a major advantage of such evaluation processes is that superintendents and school boards can clarify their respective areas of responsibility and jointly plan for the long-range future of the school. Such advantages, however, are dependent on the early and continuing involvement of the school boards in the evaluation process. It is only pragmatic to insure the involvement of those individuals who will have the final approval on the major school changes suggested by the evaluation study.

Why, if such strong arguments can be posed for school board involvement, have school boards traditionally played such a minor part in these studies? A primary reason may be that no concrete role for school board involvement in this process has ever been defined. For example, Evaluative Criteria (1969) contains few references to school board activities during the evaluation process: a form is provided for

rating school board procedures (p. 320), school board members rate the administrative staff (p. 7), and mention is made that administrators may wish to have the school board approve school philosophy statements before proceeding to the statement of school objectives (p. 30). Although it is suggested that schools may wish to involve parents and students in the evaluation procedures (p. 8), absolutely no mention is made of involving school board members in any significant way.

It does appear, in fact, that there is a general presumption that school board members will not be significantly involved in these school evaluations. In Evaluative Criteria (1969) administrators are warned that since school board members will not be familiar with the evaluation procedures, care must be taken in how study results are presented to school boards (pp. 12-14). Finally, it has been reported that in developing the evaluative review criteria for both secondary and junior high schools, the following groups were consulted: teachers, administrators, subject-matter specialists, state department representatives, and college and university instructors (Evaluative Criteria, 1969, p. 5; Manlove, 1967, p. 72). Note that school boards are conspicuously absent from this list.

Three findings of Master's (1969) study suggest that a new role of school board involvement might improve the utility of self-study evaluations if that role were compatible with school boards' governance responsibilities.

a. Board members complain that the final report is produced too late in the year to be acted upon. This complaint implies that board members have not understood the long-term nature of the evaluation and have not used the evaluation findings as input to their own long-term planning and policy deliberations.

b. Lack of resources is cited as the major reason for failure to implement evaluation recommendations. This suggests that recommendations are made without due regard for existing resource limitations. Involving school board members, who control resource allocations, should result in recommendations that are more financially feasible.

c. School board members report that they are less supportive of the evaluation process than are superintendents and principals. This implies that self-study evaluations are probably doing little to meet the information and policy needs of school boards.

Procedures which would increase school board involvement in order to insure recommendations that the board thought timely, worthy of support, financially feasible, and compatible with their governance needs, would seem to be useful additions to the evaluation process.

Although arguments can be made that school boards ought to be more involved in self-study evaluations, there is no evidence that such an increase is feasible or even desired by board members themselves. A survey study was conducted to gather such evidence.

Study Design

During March and April of 1978 a mail survey was conducted in 170 districts in 16 western states. Every district which conducted at least one self-study school evaluation during the 1976-1977 school year in these 16 states was included in the survey study. Four individuals in each district were surveyed: the district superintendent, the building principal, and two randomly chosen school board members.

Of the 675 individuals initially contacted, 89 percent of the administrators (299) and 71 percent of the school board members (240) completed and returned their questionnaires for an overall return rate of 80 percent. The average age of the respondents was 46.0 years,

with almost all the administrators being males, but one-quarter of the school board members being females. The administrators had served as principals or superintendents an average of 9.7 years, while board members had served their posts an average of 5.5 years.

The survey questionnaire contained a series of questions concerning the level of board involvement in self-study evaluations, the quality of these evaluations, the desired level and nature of board involvement, impediments to achieving it, and the desired need and nature of services designed to increase board involvement. Each of these issues is discussed in the sections that follow.

The discussion of survey results which follows frequently makes comparisons between administrator and board member perceptions since it was found that they often hold different views of the accreditation process Comparisons are also made between small districts (1-3 schools), medium districts (4-9 schools), and large districts (10 or more schools). Since the number of schools in the district serves to multiply the work load of a school board involved in school level evaluations, such a comparison seems warranted.

Board Involvement in Evaluations

Administrators and board members were asked to indicate how school board members had been involved in the 1976-1977 self-study evaluation. They reported that in most districts the school board was aware that an evaluation was taking place, were generally aware of the evaluation procedures being used, and received a copy of the final report. Their responses tended to confirm the view of low board involvement in accreditation evaluations.

Administrators consistently rated the level of board involvement in such evaluations higher than did board members. Also, administrators more often felt the board had been asked for specific study-related information than the board judged to be the case. Finally, the level of school board participation decreased as the size of the district increased.

Quality of the Evaluations

Administrators were more aware of the evaluation procedures and rated them more highly than did board members. Both groups did agree, however, that while the evaluations showed good planning and organization, they failed to meet the needs of the school boards. Although administrators and board members in small districts were more aware of the evaluation procedure used in their local evaluations, they tended to rate the quality of the procedures lower than their counterparts in the larger districts.

Most administrators and board members were aware of the study recommendations, although fewer board members were aware of them in the larger districts. Neither administrators nor board members were as positive about the quality of the evaluation recommendations as they were about the quality of the evaluation procedures. Both groups gave lowest marks to the utility of the recommendations in helping the school board set policy or make specific decisions. Though inconclusive, the data suggest that only about 60 percent of the evaluation recommendations were subsequently implemented by the school boards.

Desired Level of Board Involvement

Administrators and board members were asked to characterize the proper level of board involvement in self-study evaluations. Their responses are displayed below in Table 1.

Table 1
Appropriate School Board Involvement

	Percent Selecting Option		
	Adminis-trators	Board Members	Total
1 MINIMAL PARTICIPATION. School Boards should be aware of the proceedings, but primarily just review and act on the final recommendations	12.1	14.0	13.0
2 SLIGHT PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should provide any relevant information upon request and periodically review the progress of the evaluation.	19.5	23.4	21.2
3 MODERATE PARTICIPATION. In addition the above, School Boards should participate in planning the evaluation and in major steps like developing the school philosophy and objectives.	44.5	39.7	42.4
4 FULL PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should be actively involved in all phases of the evaluation including working on committees, and conducting preliminary reviews of all findings and recommendations.	23.9	22.9	23.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most respondents favored moderate board participation although more board members than administrators favored slight or minimal participation. When district size was taken into account, it was found that more respondents favor slight or minimal participation in the larger districts. In fact, in districts with 10 or more schools, over 46 percent of the respondents favored only slight or minimal particpation.

Respondents were also asked to identify the specific areas in which board members should be more involved. As can be seen in Table 2 below, several areas need increased board involvement, especially the reviewing of administrative and policy making activities.

Table 2
Areas Needing Increased Board Involvement

	Percent Responding "Yes"
	Total Respondents
Should Boards be more involved in:	
1 Planning the timing and activities of the evaluation	32.0
2 Deciding what school areas or evaluation questions should be emphasized	65.5
3 Developing the statement of school philosophy	88.1
4 Developing the statement of school objectives	81.4
5 Serving on specific working committees during the evaluation	66.0
6 Providing specific information for use in the evaluation	65.5
7 Reviewing administrative and policy-making activities, including its own	96.4
8 Reviewing preliminary report for accuracy and comprehensiveness	68.5
9 Providing information to the Site Visit Team	72.0
10 Reviewing preliminary recommendations for feasibility	89.3

Administrators and board members did not substantially differ in their responses to this question, but respondents in the larger districts

identified fewer areas needing increased board involvement than did respondents in smaller districts.

When asked what factors prevent boards from being more involved, respondents gave three major reasons:

- Board members do not have the time to be more involved.
- It is not clear what more board members could do.
- Boards do not need to be more involved to successfully complete the evaluations.

Both administrators and board members felt that negative outcomes were slightly less likely to occur from increased board involvement than were positive outcomes, although even the positive outcomes were only considered be somewhat likely. Taking district size into consideration, positive outcomes still appear more likely than negative outcomes, but the likelihood of negative outcomes increases as the districts become larger.

Desired School Board Assistance

Self-instructional materials and available inservice training systems were judged by both administrators and board members to be the most useful avenues for increasing board involvement in accreditation evaluations. The two groups disagreed, however, on how these services ought to be delivered. Administrators wanted these services provided as part of the accreditation process, while board members favored making the services simply available upon request. Both groups agreed that state and regional accrediting associations, followed by state school boards associations and state departments of education, should be the primary agencies to deliver such assistance.

Conclusions

Based on the survey results and on widespread communication with administrators and board members, it appears that some assistance should be provided to increase school board involvement in self-study accreditation evaluations. This assistance should be targeted primarily on the smaller school districts where the need and opportunity for increased involvement is much greater than in the larger districts. Any assistance given should be focused on improving board involvement in just a few areas (all boards indicate that lack of time is a major problem) and should take into account the different perspectives of administrators and board members and the differing constraints on large versus small districts.

In summary, it appears that local districts do not want and could not accomodate as much school board involvement in self-study evaluations as one might argue for. There is, however, a real interest, especially in the smaller schools, in increasing board involvement. These districts and their use of the evaluation process could benefit from increased school board participation should the appropriate assistance become available.

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Evaluative Criteria. National Study of Secondary School Evaluation: Washington, D.C., Fourth Edition, 1969.

Littrell, J.H., & Bailey, G.D. The accreditation process: Focusing on the advantages. NASSP Bulletin, 60(401), 1976, 68-70.

Manlove, D.C. Evaluation in junior high schools. Teachers College Journal, 39(2), 1967, 70-72.

Master, L.S. An examination of the attitudes of teachers, principals, superintendents and board members toward the process of secondary school evaluation in fifty-seven North Central Association high schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1969.

APPENDIX A:

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE AND
COVER LETTERS

School Boards and School Accrediting Evaluations

WAS YOUR SCHOOL BOARD INVOLVED IN THE ACCREDITATION EVALUATION CONDUCTED IN YOUR DISTRICT LAST YEAR?

DO YOU THINK CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE IN THE WAYS SCHOOL BOARDS PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL EVALUATIONS?

This is a survey of western school districts that conducted self-study accrediting evaluations during the 1976-77 school year. Based on the results, policy recommendations will be made to the National Study of School Evaluation concerning the role of School Boards in local accrediting evaluations.

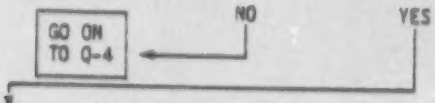
Please answer all the questions. If you wish to comment on any question or qualify your answers, please use the margins or a separate sheet of paper. You cooperation is much appreciated.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 SW Second Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

Q-1 We would like to begin by asking you to recall how the School Board was involved in the self-study accreditation evaluation conducted in your district last year.

During the self-study evaluation:	Did this happen? (Circle your answer) YES I BELIEVE SO	NO NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE
1 Was the School Board aware an evaluation was being conducted?	YES	NO
2 Was the School Board generally aware of what procedures were being used to conduct the evaluation?	YES	NO
3 Did the School Board assist in scheduling the evaluation activities?	YES	NO
4 Did the School Board assist with the development of the statement of school philosophy?	YES	NO
5 Did the School Board assist with the development of the statement of school objectives?	YES	NO
6 Did any individual School Board member serve on an evaluation working committee during the study?	YES	NO
7 Was the School Board asked to provide any particular information especially for the evaluation study?	YES	NO
9 Was the School Board asked to specify what it wanted to know as a result of the evaluation?	YES	NO
9 Did the School Board participate in a review of its own procedures as part of the evaluation?	YES	NO
10 Did the School Board rate the performance of the administrative staff as part of the evaluation?	YES	NO
11 Did the School Board receive interim reports on the progress of the evaluation?	YES	NO
12 Was the School Board asked to review preliminary findings or recommendations for their feasibility?	YES	NO
13 Did members of the School Board meet with the Site Visit Team to discuss the school program?	YES	NO
14 Were members of the School Board present to hear the report of the Site Visit Team?	YES	NO
15 Did the School Board receive a copy of the final evaluation report or recommendations?	YES	NO

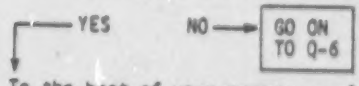
Q-2 Are yuu familiar with the evaluation procedures used in the study? (Circle your answer)



Q-3 What do you think of the quality of the evaluation procedures used?

To what extent would you say the evaluation:	Was this true? (Circle your answer) NOT AT ALL	SOME-WHAT	QUITE A BIT	A GREAT DEAL
1 Showed good planning and organization	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
2 Addressed the most important school questions.	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
3 Involved the appropriate people	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
4 Was technically well conducted	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
5 Included all relevant information and opinions	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
6 Had sufficient resources available	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
7 Was worth the effort and expense it took . . .	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
8 Met the needs of the School Board	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL

Q-4 How would you assess the quality of the final recommendations made to the School Board as a result of the evaluation study? Are you familiar with the final recommendations? (Circle your answer)



To the best of your memory, would you say the recommendations:	Was this true? (Circle your answer) NOT AT ALL	SOME-WHAT	QUITE A BIT	A GREAT DEAL
1 Were adequately presented to the School Board.	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
2 Were presented to the School Board at an appropriate time of year	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
3 Were well thought out and justified	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
4 Addressed important school issues	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
5 Were legally and financially feasible	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
6 Were reasonable and practical	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
7 Would lead to the improvement of local education if accomplished	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
8 Were helpful to the School Board in setting school policy	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL
9 Assisted the School Board in making certain specific decisions	NOT	SOME	Q-BIT	G-DEAL

Q-5 Since it has been about a year since the evaluation, the School Board has had a chance to consider these recommendations. Recall how the Board finally dealt with the evaluation recommendations. What is your personal estimate of the percent of the recommendations handled as follows?

____% WERE REJECTED AFTER PRELIMINARY REVIEW

____% WERE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED BUT FINALLY DROPPED OR POSTPONED

____% WERE IMPLEMENTED AND ARE NOW BEING FOLLOWED

____% HAVE ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED AND ACCOMPLISHED

100 %

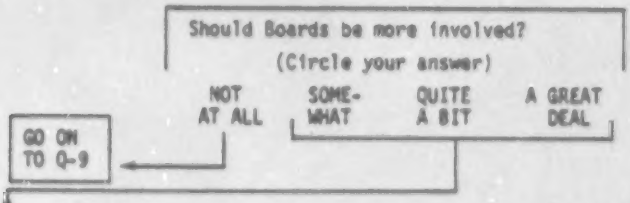
Q-6 We would now like to ask you some questions that will help us understand how you think School Boards can and should be involved in such evaluations. Based on last year's experience, why do you think School Board members are not more involved in accrediting evaluations?

School Boards are not more involved because:	Is this true of your School Board? (Circle your answer) DEFINITELY NO	GENERALLY NO	GENERALLY YES	DEFINITELY YES
1 Our School Board members do not have the time	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES
2 Greater School Board participation is not needed to successfully complete the evaluations . .	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES
3 Our School Board has little to gain by being more involved	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES
4 It is our formal district policy that the School Board not be more involved .	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES
5 It is standard practice in our district that the School Board not be more involved	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES
6 It is not clear what more our School Board could do in such evaluations	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES
7 No materials or other assistance are available to help our School Board members be more involved . .	DEF-NO	GEN-NO	GEN-YES	DEF-YES

8 Other (Please specify) _____

_____

Q-7 To what extent should Board members be more involved in local self-study evaluations?



Q-8 In what ways should School Boards be more involved in these evaluations?

Boards should be more involved in:	Do you agree? (Circle your answer) YES	NO
1 Planning the timing and activities of the evaluation	YES	NO
2 Deciding what school areas or evaluation questions should be emphasized	YES	NO
3 Developing the statement of school philosophy . .	YES	NO
4 Developing the statement of school objectives . .	YES	NO
5 Serving on specific working committees during the evaluation	YES	NO
6 Providing specific information for use in the evaluation	YES	NO
7 Reviewing administrative and policy-making activities, including its own	YES	NO
8 Reviewing preliminary report for accuracy and comprehensiveness	YES	NO
9 Providing information to the Site Visit Team . . .	YES	NO
10 Reviewing preliminary recommendations for feasibility	YES	NO

Q-9 Are there areas where School Board members should be less involved in such evaluations? (Circle your answer)

NO YES (Please specify areas) _____

_____

_____

Q-10 In general, what is the proper role for School Boards in self-study evaluations? (Circle one)

1 MINIMAL PARTICIPATION. School Boards should be aware of the proceedings, but primarily just review and act on the final recommendations.

2 SLIGHT PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should provide any relevant information upon request and periodically review the progress of the evaluation.

3 MODERATE PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should participate in planning the evaluation and in major steps like developing the school philosophy and objectives.

4 FULL PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should be actively involved in all phases of the evaluation including working on committees, and conducting preliminary reviews of all findings and recommendations.

Q-11 What will probably happen if School Boards become more involved in evaluations?

If School Boards became more involved:	Is this likely to happen? (Circle your answer) NOT LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	HIGHLY LIKELY
1 Such evaluations would take more time to complete	NOT	SOMEWHAT	HIGHLY
2 There would be greater community and school support for the evaluations.	NOT	SOMEWHAT	HIGHLY
3 School staff and administrators would resent the School Board intrusion.	NOT	SOMEWHAT	HIGHLY
4 More legally and financially feasible recommendations would result	NOT	SOMEWHAT	HIGHLY
5 Other School Board work would suffer from less attention.	NOT	SOMEWHAT	HIGHLY
6 More evaluation recommendations would be implemented	NOT	SOMEWHAT	HIGHLY

7 What other outcomes are likely? (Please specify) _____

_____

_____

Q-12 If School Board involvement in self-study evaluations were to be increased, what kinds of services would be most useful to School Boards? (Circle all that apply)

1 SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

2 AN INSERVICE TRAINING SYSTEM AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

3 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CAPABILITY SUCH AS LOCAL CONSULTATION BY EXPERIENCED SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN THE REGION

4 REGULAR INSERVICE TRAINING FOR ALL BOARD MEMBERS

5 OTHER (Please specify) _____

_____

Q-13 How should these services be provided to School Board members? (Circle one)

1 AS PART OF THE ACCREDITING EVALUATION FORMS AND PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

2 AS SEPARATE SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL BOARDS TO REQUEST AS NEEDED

3 AS SEPARATE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FOR THEIR USE IN WORKING WITH SCHOOL BOARDS

4 OTHER (Please specify) _____

_____

Q-14 Which groups ought to provide these services to School Boards? (Circle all that apply)

1 STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

2 REGIONAL AND STATE ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

3 STATE SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATIONS

4 UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

5 STATE ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATIONS

6 OTHER (Please specify) _____

_____

Finally, we would like to ask you some questions to help with the statistical analysis.

Q-15 What is your age? _____ YEARS

Q-16 What is your sex? _____ MALE _____ FEMALE

Q-17 How long have you been: (Answer all that apply)

A BUILDING PRINCIPAL: _____ YEARS

A DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: _____ YEARS

A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER: _____ YEARS

Are there any other comments you would like to make about the role of School Boards in self-study accrediting evaluations? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Your assistance with this survey is very much appreciated. If you would like a summary of the results, please print your name and address on the back of the envelope (not on this questionnaire) with the words "copy of results requested." Thank you for your help.

FIRST LETTER

INSERT A: Name of school conducting evaluation
INSERT B: "the district superintendent"
"the building principal"
"a school board member"

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S.W. Second Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97204 • Telephone (503) 248-6800

March 6, 1978

During 1976-77 a school in your district, [Insert A], conducted a self-study evaluation. It was one of several hundred schools across the nation that underwent an evaluation as part of the regional and state accredition process. Although local school boards are expected to implement the evaluation recommendations, some boards are highly involved in the actual evaluation process while others are not involved at all. We are conducting this study to find out why.

This national survey is sponsored by the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE, the national school accrediting association) with the cooperation of the state and regional accrediting associations and the state school boards' associations. Because you were [Insert B] during last year's evaluation study, you have firsthand knowledge about the role of your school board in the evaluation process. Since only two school administrators and two school board members from your district are being asked for their opinions, it is vital that your questionnaire be completed and returned. Please complete and return it today, if possible.

You may be assured of complete anonymity. Each questionnaire contains an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so that we can check your name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will not be placed on the questionnaire and the results of the study will be grouped so that an answer on any single questionnaire cannot be identified.

Based on the results of this survey, policy recommendations will be made to NSSE concerning the role of School Boards in local accrediting evaluations. The results will also be shared with regional and state accrediting associations, state school boards' associations, and all interested citizens. You may receive a summary of the results by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the return envelope, and printing your name and address below it. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call (503) 248-6845.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Nick L. Smith
Senior Research Associate
and Project Director

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

FIRST FOLLOWUP

(Postcard)

Last week I sent you a questionnaire asking how your school board was involved in an accrediting evaluation conducted in your district last year.

If you have already sent it back, please accept my sincere thanks. Your contribution to this study is most appreciated. If you have not yet returned it, please do so today. Because the questionnaire was sent to only four people in your district, it is essential that we have your questionnaire if we are to understand what really happened in your district.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me right now, collect (503) 248-6845 and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Nick L. Smith
Senior Research Associate and Project Director

SECOND FOLLOWUP

INSERT A: Name of school conducting evaluation
INSERT B: "the district superintendent"
"the building principal"
"a school board member"

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S.W. Second Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97204 • Telephone (503) 248-6800

March 27, 1978

About three weeks ago I wrote to you asking for your opinions about how your local school board was involved in last year's self-study evaluation of [Insert A] in your district. As of yet, we have not received your completed questionnaire.

This study is being conducted with the cooperation of the national, regional, and state school accrediting associations and the state school boards' associations to understand how school boards can better be involved in local school evaluations.

I am writing to you again because of the importance of including your questionnaire in our study. Only four people in your district were asked for their opinions and because you were [Insert B] at the time of the evaluation, it is essential that you return your questionnaire if the results of the study are to accurately reflect your district.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, I have enclosed another copy. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to write or call (503/248-6845).

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Nick L. Smith
Senior Research Associate
and Project Director

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

THIRD FOLLOWUP INSERT A: Name of school conducting evaluation

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S.W. Second Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97204 • Telephone (503) 248-6800

April 10, 1978

I am writing about the questionnaire I sent you asking how your local school board was involved in last year's accrediting evaluation of [Insert A] in your district. To the best of my knowledge, I have still not received your response.

The large number of questionnaires returned is very encouraging. However, since only four people in your district were asked for their opinions, not having your questionnaire may leave us with incorrect results. Those people from your district who have already responded may feel differently about what happened than you do. We would very much like to include your views in our results. In case the earlier questionnaires did not reach you or have been misplaced, I have enclosed a replacement.

In order for the results to be timely and useful, we need to proceed promptly with summarizing them. I hope that you will return your questionnaire right away. If you have any questions, immediately call me collect at (503) 248-6845.

The results of this survey will be made available to all interested citizens. Many of those who have already returned their questionnaires have requested copies of the results. I would be happy to send you a copy if you put your name and address on the back of the return envelope with the words "copy of results requested."

Thank you very much for your consideration and help.

Sincerely,

Nick L. Smith
Senior Research Associate
and Project Director

encl.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF RESULTS LETTER

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S.W. Second Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97204 • Telephone (503) 248-6800

August 1978

During March and April of this year we conducted a survey of administrators and school board members in 170 districts in 16 western states. These districts had conducted self-study accreditation evaluations of their schools during the 1976-1977 school year, and we wanted to know local opinions about the role of school boards in such evaluations. We were very grateful that you assisted us by completing and returning your questionnaire. As you may recall, at the time of the survey we promised to supply you with a copy of the results when the data were tabulated. These, then, are the results we promised.

Of the 675 questionnaires mailed out, 89 percent of the administrators (299) and 71 percent of the school board members (240) completed and returned theirs.

We found that in the larger districts, school boards are less and less involved in accreditation evaluations, although they are aware that the evaluation is being conducted, what procedures are being used, and they do receive a copy of the final report. Administrators tend to know more about the evaluation procedures and recommendations and rate them higher than board members, but both groups agree that the evaluation recommendations generally do not meet the needs of the school board in helping them set policy or decide specific questions.

We asked administrators and board members how much involvement boards should have in accreditation evaluations. As you can see from the table below, over 40 percent of the total group thought Moderate Participation was appropriate.

	Administrators	Board Members	Total
1 MINIMAL PARTICIPATION. School Boards should be aware of the proceedings, but primarily just review and act on the final recommendations	12.1	14.0	13.0
2 SLIGHT PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should provide any relevant information upon request and periodically review the progress of the evaluation.	19.5	23.4	21.2
3 MODERATE PARTICIPATION. In addition the above, School Boards should participate in planning the evaluation and in major steps like developing the school philosophy and objectives.	44.5	39.7	42.4
4 FULL PARTICIPATION. In addition to the above, School Boards should be actively involved in all phases of the evaluation including working on committees, and conducting preliminary reviews of all findings and recommendations.	23.9	22.9	23.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Next, we asked what areas school boards should be more involved in. According to the responses, boards should certainly be more involved in reviewing administrative and policy-making activities.

	Percent Responding "Yes" Total Respondents
Should Boards be more involved in:	
1 Planning the timing and activities of the evaluation	32.0
2 Deciding what school areas or evaluation questions should be emphasized	65.5
3 Developing the statement of school philosophy	88.1
4 Developing the statement of school objectives	81.4
5 Serving on specific working committees during the evaluation	66.0
6 Providing specific information for use in the evaluation	65.5
7 Reviewing administrative and policy-making activities, including its own	96.4
8 Reviewing preliminary report for accuracy and comprehensiveness	68.5
9 Providing information to the Site Visit Team	72.0
10 Reviewing preliminary recommendations for feasibility	89.3

Most people thought self-instructional materials and an available inservice training system would be most helpful in increasing school board involvement. Administrators thought these services ought to be provided as part of the accreditation process, while board members thought the services should just be available on request. Both groups agreed that regional and state accrediting associations should primarily provide these services, with state school board associations and state departments of education secondarily providing some assistance.

There is a need for greater school board involvement in accreditation evaluations, especially in smaller districts. Larger districts (10 or more schools) indicate that the board has too little time to be involved and more people favor only slight or minimal board participation in these districts.

We wish to thank you again for participating in the survey. If you have any further questions, I would be most happy to answer them.

Sincerely,

Nick L. Smith, Director
Research on Evaluation Program